

Official Magazine of the Air Force Reserve

CITIZEN AIRMAN

Vol. 67 No. 1 February 2015

www.afrc.af.mil



THE FAMILY BUSINESS

RESERVE PILOT FOLLOWING IN MOTHER'S, FATHER'S
AND BROTHER'S FOOTSTEPS

LIEUTENANT GENERAL
James F. Jackson
 ★★ ★
 FROM THE TOP



Take time to make
 personal connections
 with your fellow
 Airmen.



A CULTURE OF CONNECTION

This past year was busy. Our operational tempo remained high as the nation faced unexpected threats. We demonstrated our operational capability, strategic depth and surge capacity for the Air Force, and you performed superbly.

You should be proud of your contribution to our nation's defense. I am immensely proud of the way you have accomplished the mission. We need to continue to focus on our Airmen. As we begin 2015, we want to foster a culture of connection.

Our mission success is critical, and it is totally dependent on you as individual Airmen. We are the most capable and professional Air Force in the world, but none of this is possible without you. Chief Kirksey and I want to encourage you to get connected and make it a priority to look out for each other. You will hear more about the importance of connection from both the chief and me throughout the year. This year's Wingman Day theme is "I am Connected." We must continue to strengthen our team and build a force that is connected to

each other and that has strong ties to the local community and to Reservists' families and friends.

As your commander, I am concerned about your health and welfare. This past year, we lost too many of our fellow Citizen Airmen to suicide. Although there are no clear trends in what triggers suicides, we know being connected to a group can help prevent feelings of isolation and hopelessness. We need to foster stronger relationships and peer-to-peer relationships. Our team has worked hard to provide programs and resources to help you get connected.

I know many of you have heard me talk about the importance of our Wingman Toolkit app and website. The resources found within the Wingman Toolkit provide great guidance and information about comprehensive Airman fitness, focusing on your physical, mental, spiritual and social well-being. This tool is just one example of the resources available to you, and we are working to improve them every day. I challenge each of you to look for ways to get connected with your unit

and your teammates.

Connecting to our Airmen and looking out for each other has to be a team effort. We all need someone to rely on from time to time. As a mostly part-time force, we need to get to know the Air Force Reserve members we serve with. I encourage you to take time to make personal connections with your fellow Airmen. We must continue to look out for each other and take time to ask the tough questions. It also means having the courage to ask for help in the midst of your own struggle. By creating strong connections, we create an environment where we have a wingman to call during challenging times. This is a battle we must win and one that will take the whole team. Thanks for all you do!

CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT

Cameron B. Kirksey

CHIEF'S VIEW

EACH ONE REACH ONE

Welcome to 2015! This year we want to focus on connections. In the December issue of *Citizen Airman*, we talked about the importance of comprehensive Airman fitness. Wellness for our Airmen and their families involves physical, mental, spiritual and social aspects. This year my focus for team wellness is going to be based on the idea of creating connections.

So why are we focused on connections this year? In 2014, we lost 10 of our enlisted Airmen to suicide. These deaths impact the entire force and trouble me as your command chief. Although the circumstances were different in each

case, one common element was the fact that all of the Airmen were alone when they made the choice to end their life. We have to do a better job of reaching out and connecting to our Airmen, particularly our enlisted force.

As traditional or part-time Reservists, it can be challenging to stay connected. For those of you who don't live close to a base, it is easy to feel isolated when you are not with your unit. Develop a habit of finding one or two Airmen in your organization you can connect with outside of work. Develop relationships with your fellow Airmen and leverage those relationships during days away from your Reserve assignment. In addition to connecting with your fellow Airmen, take the time to make friends outside of work. For those of you with families, encourage them to make connections to other spouses and families in the unit.

I encourage you to focus on the peer-to-peer connections. We all know it is important for supervisors and commanders to know their people, but how well do you know your peers? Take time to get to know those Airmen around you and build relationships outside of the office. Stay in touch throughout the month, not just when you are at your Reserve job.

I recently spoke with one of our Airmen about suicide prevention. She explained what it was like to feel so trapped and desperate that she felt she had no way out. In fact, she had a plan to end her life. She was fortunate, because she had made the time to make connections and had a wingman she called when she was at her lowest point. For her, a peer-to-peer connection made the difference and saved her life.

Are you the kind of wingman a friend can call if he or she is in trouble? If not, I encourage you to work on developing those types of relationships and connections. One day you may be able to save a life.

We have to build connections continuously. We can't wait until someone is in need before we reach out. Make sure you are making an effort to make quality connections during this coming year. Both General Jackson and I believe that together we can build stronger Airmen, stronger families and a stronger Air Force Reserve. And remember, I'm here for you!



Are you the kind of wingman a friend can call if he or she is in trouble?

CITIZEN AIRMAN

Vol. 67 No. 1

February 2015

6

Reserve In Focus

8

Round the Reserve

12

Air Force Academy has openings for the right Reserve enlisted members

14

One cadet offers advice for applying to, succeeding at, the Academy

16

Reserve pilot following in mother's, father's and brother's footsteps

19

Chaplain rides passion for helping others all the way to Congress

20

Education office explains process for applying for Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits

22

Amateur radio operator helps save lives during severe weather events



On the cover: First Lt. Meaghan Cosand flies C-5 Galaxies for the Air Force Reserve's 349th Air Mobility Wing, Travis Air Force Base, California. Flying for the Reserve is kind of a family business for the Cosands. For more on how Meaghan followed her mother, father and brother into the cockpit, see the story on Page 16. (Lt. Col. Robert Couse-Baker)

Gen. Mark A. Welsh III *Chief of Staff, United States Air Force*

Lt. Gen. James F. Jackson *Commander, Air Force Reserve Command*

Col. Robert P. Palmer *Director of Public Affairs, Air Force Reserve Command*

Cliff Tyler *Managing Editor*

Bo Joyner *Associate Editor*

Adam Butterick *Designer*

Citizen Airman magazine (ISSN No. 0887-9680) is published bi-monthly by Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command Office of Public Affairs for the commander of Air Force Reserve Command. Periodical postage paid at Warner Robins, Ga., and additional mailing offices. Copies are mailed, free of charge, to the homes of all Reservists. Content is normally news articles and features developed for release to commercial media as part of the Air Force Reserve's continuing public affairs program. Opinions of contributors are not necessarily those of the Air Force Reserve. All photos are U.S. Air Force photos unless otherwise indicated. Readers-per-copy ratio: 4-1.

Send inquiries and submissions to HQ AFRC/PAP, 155 Richard Ray Blvd., Robins AFB, GA 31098-1661. Or, email them to afrc.pap@us.af.mil. For questions about the magazine or its contents, you can call (478) 327-1770 or DSN 497-1770.

Moving? PLEASE DO NOT SEND CHANGES OF ADDRESS TO *CITIZEN AIRMAN*. To continue receiving the magazine, unit Reservists, as well as people serving a statutory tour of duty, should send a change of address to their military personnel flight or unit orderly room. Individual mobilization augmentees should call the Total Force Service Center-Denver toll free at 800-525-0102 or DSN 847-3294.

POSTMASTER: Please send all Forms 3579 to *Citizen Airman*, HQ AFRC/PAP, 155 Richard Ray Blvd., Robins AFB, GA 31098-1661.



Staff Sgt. Dontea White scans the area around his convoy for simulated explosive ordnance devices during the dismounted operations portion of the Base Security Operations course at the Silver Flag Alpha Range Complex north of Las Vegas, Nevada. White is training for his first deployment and is currently assigned to the 512th Security Forces Squadron at Dover Air Force Base, Delaware. (Tech. Sgt. Nadine Barclay)



Master Sgt. Ed Shaffer, an aircraft maintenance craftsman with the 910th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, Youngstown Air Reserve Station, Ohio, secures safety wire under the nose of a C-130 Hercules aircraft. The safety wiring was attached as part of an armor plating system installation. Youngstown is the second base to receive a test version of the new system, designed for easier and more secure installation and better protection for aircrew members. (Eric M. White)



Members of the 512th Airlift Wing at Dover Air Force Base, Delaware, participated in the Mid-Atlantic Savage Race recently at Hopkins Farm, Maryland. The Air Force Reserve was the premiere sponsor for the obstacle race, which was 4 to 6 miles long and had more than 20 obstacles along the way.



Master Sgt. Edwin Del Valle attaches a tie-down chain on an M1A2 Abrams tank in the cargo compartment of a C-17 Globemaster III at North Auxiliary Airfield in North, South Carolina. The tank movement was part of a two-day exercise that integrated C-17 air and ground crew training for 315th Airlift Wing Airmen stationed at Joint Base Charleston, South Carolina, as well as Soldiers from one of the 3rd Infantry Division's immediate ready companies stationed at Fort Stewart, Georgia. (Tech. Sgt. Shane Ellis)



Leaders at Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Georgia, salute a U.S. Air Force C-130 Hercules as it takes off for a deployment in January. More than 150 members from the 94th Airlift Wing deployed to support the Central Command area of responsibility. (Brad Fallin)



Officer Promotion Board Changes Take Affect

The Air Force has implemented changes to the advanced academic degree and developmental education information visible on officer selection briefs for promotion boards.

As of Dec. 1, advanced academic degree information for line officers is masked for promotion selection boards below the grade of colonel.

Another change limits the visibility of how and when developmental education is completed. New officer selection briefs show a course and that it is complete. It does not display when a course was completed or whether it was completed by correspondence or in-residence.

These changes affect both active-duty and Air Force Reserve members. The first Reserve boards impacted are this month's Air Force Reserve Line and Non-line Major Promotion Selection Boards.

Non-line officers, such as chaplains and those in the medical and nurses corps, are unaffected by the changes to the advanced academic degree information, as they fall under the April 12, 2006, memorandum from the Air Force secretary and chief of staff requiring that data on the highest two degrees be visible to promotion boards for these individuals. However, the changes to developmental education do apply.

Lt Col. Amy J. Boehle, acting director, Promotion Board Secretariat, Headquarters Air Reserve Personnel Center, said in the six months prior to every board, ARPC forwards a member's officer pre-selection brief to the servicing military personnel section, which, in turn, provides it to the member for review. Officers who are eligible for this month's Air Force Reserve major's board received pre-selection brief documents reflecting these changes.

The changes to the academic degree and developmental education expectations are designed to restore Airmen's time and refocus officer promotions on job performance. The Air Force identified that unnecessary demands were being placed on Airmen as they pursued time-consuming education simply to fill perceived check boxes for promotion.

"Our intention is to set clear expectations and ensure that, where possible, we give time back to our officers," said Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Welsh. "Since job performance is the most important factor when evaluating an officer for promotion, the decision to delay the

completion of an advanced academic degree will not affect their ability to serve a full career in the Air Force."

Officers with questions regarding these changes should contact the Total Force Service Center at 210-565-0102 (press option 3 and follow the prompt). (Master Sgt. Timm Huffman, Headquarters Individual Reservist Readiness and Integration Organization public affairs, Buckley Air Force Base, Colorado)

High School Algebra Actually Does Have a Practical Purpose

Members of the 434th Air Refueling Wing at Grissom Air Reserve Base, Indiana, are using high school algebra, a course many people think is useless for day-to-day activities, to accomplish the wing's mission.

As it turns out, algebra comes in handy when figuring out how to properly load palletized cargo onto KC-135 Stratotanker aircraft. This fact was reinforced in a recent training course.

"Pallet building combines several basic skills, such as high school algebra and geometry, to safely and efficiently load cargo onto aircraft," said Brian Wright, 434th ARW contracted combat readiness resource specialist. "Without the training, cargo could be loaded improperly and lead to damaged equipment or, even worse, an injury."

From the beginning of the course, fundamentals of balance and geometry are introduced to allow pallets to be loaded efficiently, Wright said.

"The math ensures that the cargo is loaded in a square or pyramid shape to fit within the parameters set for the pallet size needed for a specific aircraft," he said. "This is where the efficiency comes into play. The better a pallet is loaded, the more you can fit in the plane, and this saves the Air Force money."

Loading a pallet and cargo properly also prevents items from shifting during flight.

"Cargo that is not loaded and tied down the way it is supposed to can shift during flight and injure passengers," Wright said. "That is why the palletized cargo has to be distributed evenly and tied with the appropriate straps."

Larger items that can't fit on a pallet due to shape or size still have to be balanced, properly loaded and secured.

"Algebra equations are used to determine the center-of-balance for large items such as cars and trucks," Wright said. "The center of balance will then determine how and where the items will be loaded." (Staff Sgt. Ben Mota, 434th ARW public affairs)

Aerial Porters Travel To Senegal to Help Fight Ebola Virus

Members of the 36th and 86th Aerial Port Squadrons at McChord Field, Washington, are working with their counterparts from the active-duty 62nd APS to support Air Force operations in Senegal to help in the fight against the Ebola virus.

Operation United Assistance is directed by the U.S. Agency for International Development and incorporates a broad array of federal agencies. About 15 air transportation specialists from the 446th Airlift Wing at McChord traveled to Dakar, Senegal, in November to support ground personnel for the campaign.

"Our primary mission here is to move humanitarian cargo into countries affected by the Ebola virus disease," said Senior Master Sgt. Marshall Stokoe, 86th APS. "Not only has this been a collaboration between three aerial port squadrons (86th APS, 36th APS and 62nd APS), but it has also been a joint service effort. We have been working directly with the Army's 21st Theater Sustainment Command and the 101st Sustainment Brigade. This collaboration has been integral in accomplishing our mission."

The U.S. military has committed approximately 3,900 troops to support the mission. They staff medical laboratories and provide training to local health-care workers. In addition, they have built treatment units and a 25-bed hospital.

"I would say our biggest customer right now is the Defense Logistics Agency," Stokoe said. "We are primarily moving cargo such as food and personal protective equipment for them into the EVD-affected areas."

While bringing plenty of experience to the table, the Citizen Airmen are finding opportunities to learn and expand their skills.

"Fortunately our people are pretty experienced, given our deployment schedule over the last decade," Stokoe said. "However, there are certain aspects of working this mission that are unique and are exposing our people to situations we would not normally see."

According to Stokoe, the most difficult part of the missions is the downtime and accommodations.

"Unfortunately, we don't have a lot of resources when it comes to MWR (morale, welfare and recreation) stuff right now," he said. "Tent life proves to be a bit difficult when you are running 24-hour operations, as it is 24-hour quiet hours and you pretty much have to vacate your tent so the other shift can get their rest. We have made do with the facilities we have in our work center though. We have a projector and screen for movies and video games when there is downtime. We also have plenty of board games and card games as well. We also get to make trips to downtown Dakar when mission permits."

The teams of aerial port specialists are expected to return to McChord in the spring. (Sandra Pishner, 446th AW public affairs)

New Software Puts Computer Help Desk at Reservists' Fingertips

Reservists at McChord Field, Washington, are using a new software program called Virtual Enterprise Service Desk to see how their computers are running and fix basic problems.

"The user can go into vESD and make the changes themselves instead of Cyberspace Operations making the changes," said Senior Master Sgt. Cindy Thomas, 446th Force Support Squadron client systems technician.

Opening the vESD icon on the computer desktop launches a scan, which displays the status of the computer and alerts the user of any problems. The program helps correct simple problems to Microsoft Outlook or the network and can also resolve issues with Blackberry and iPhone devices. The vESD program also provides a way for Reservists to provide feedback.

While not all functions are available at this time, 446th Airlift Wing Airmen will eventually be able to address email and telephone issues and submit work tickets.

In addition to using vESD, Airmen can still contact 446th FSS Cyberspace Operations directly for computer support. When seeking help to diagnose a computer problem, it's never too soon to call.

"Reservists are working for such a short period of time they shouldn't wait to address the problem," said Staff Sgt. Paul Hansen, 446th FSS client systems technician.



Many basic problems can be diagnosed and solved over the phone, he said. Occasionally more complex problems may require CST personnel to remotely log into Reservists' computers to correct the issue. For serious issues, technicians may have to come out to the unit to fix the computer or take the device with them to correct the problem.

"The two biggest issues for computers that come up are allowing a computer to sit idle for too long and port security," Hansen said.

He said computers on the network should be logged into weekly. If they sit idle for 30 days or more, the computers will be automatically removed from the network. Port security problems arise when computer or printer network cables are unplugged from the "wall jack" and moved to another "wall jack." If this happens, the device will be denied access to the network. (Staff Sgt. Bryan Hull, 446th AW public affairs)

Nellis Group Becomes a Wing

A former group at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada, was redesignated as a wing during a ceremony Dec. 5.

The 926th Group became the 926th Wing. The wing, part of Air Force Reserve Command's 10th Air Force headquartered at Naval Air Station Fort Worth Joint Reserve Base, Texas, is an associate unit to the U.S. Air Force Warfare Center, 432nd Wing and 49th Wing at Holloman AFB, New Mexico.

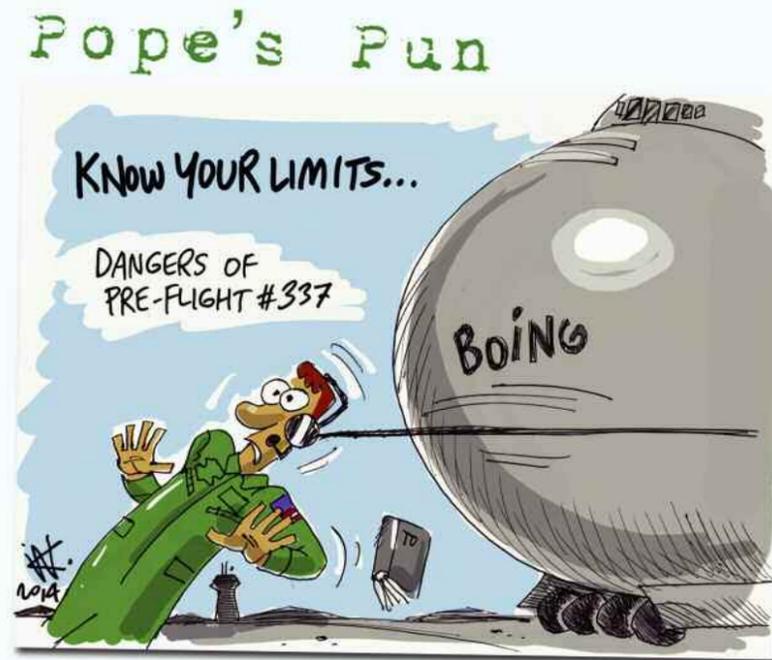
The new wing comprises 13 squadrons and more than 1,300 Reservists integrated with active-duty Air Force units at six geographically separated units. On the same day that the group was redesignated as a wing, the 926th and 726th Operations Groups were activated at Creech AFB, Nevada.

"The standup of the 926th Wing is really a celebration of what has been accomplished by those who have gone before us," said Col. Ross Anderson, wing commander. The colonel said the 926th started out as a "small cadre of individuals" that has "turned into a wing of over 1,300 members, acknowledging the fact that we bring a very specific and skilled mission set to the organization."

"The 926th Wing at Nellis is a Total Force Integration wing that's tied directly to Nellis Air Force Base and Creech Air Force Base missions, the warfare center at Nellis and the (Air Combat Command) missions at Creech Air Force Base flying the remotely piloted aircraft," Anderson said. (Tech. Sgt. Sanjay Allen, 99th Air Base Wing public affairs, Nellis AFB)

Charleston Wing Continues With Combined UTA Construct

After a three-month trial period, the commander of the 315th Airlift Wing at Joint Base Charleston, South Carolina, made the decision in December for the wing to continue with one combined unit training



assembly weekend for the foreseeable future, with an unsupported alternate weekend.

Historically, the 315th AW had operated over two or three drill weekends, to keep up with mission requirements.

"At the conclusion of the trial period, wing leadership assessed the overall effectiveness, and based on the significant financial gains and the manpower efficiencies created by combining our efforts, I made the final determination on keeping the wing at a single UTA," said Col. James Fontanella. "I believe

that we can better meet our mission objectives and air mobility priorities with the strength of one combined team each month."

Leading up to the trial period, which began in October, a business case study was performed over 18 months to evaluate the possibility of a single UTA and the potential cost-savings and efficiencies that could be gained by this transition.

"Unit-by-unit assessments were conducted with leadership and members from across the wing," said Maj. Kimberly Y. Champagne, wing

process manager. "We studied the gaps between the current state and proposed future state, and then an action plan was created for each unit with countermeasures to execute."

After an extensive study, the 315th identified substantial financial savings to be gained by converting to a single UTA. During the three-month trial period, the wing saved more than \$300,000 in salary and per diem costs. Also, significant time savings were achieved by streamlining processes and operational tasks that were identified during the study.

Colonel uses his retirement ceremony to honor WW II veteran

The commander of a Colorado Air Force Reserve unit chose to use his retirement ceremony to secretly honor a World War II Army veteran for his service in Europe.

Everything appeared to be routine as a crowd gathered to say goodbye to Col. Steven T. Liddy, commander of the Reserve National Security Space Institute at Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado, during his retirement ceremony Dec. 7, Pearl Harbor Day, at the Air Force Academy. Shortly, after the ceremony began, Liddy turned the focus of attention from himself to Uwe G. Grapengeter, a German immigrant who he had met less than a year earlier.

Prior to the ceremony, Liddy had arranged to present the Bronze Star to Grapengeter in recognition of his service during the war. Army Brig. Gen. Robert P. Walters Jr. was on hand to present the medal. The only other people who knew about the presentation were Grapengeter's family and the ceremony staff.

Liddy met Grapengeter in January 2014 at a Coast Guard Auxiliary meeting in Denver. Grapengeter had joined the auxiliary in 1977 and is still active in the organization. The two struck up a conversation about Grapengeter's military career. Based on the conversation, Liddy believed his new friend's military records were incomplete, so he asked for permission to help get them updated. Initially, Grapengeter resisted, but he eventually agreed to give Liddy access to his records.

Grapengeter was born in Hamburg, Germany, in 1925. His father immigrated to the United States in 1927, settling in Elizabeth, New Jersey. A year later, his mother brought him and his sister to the United States.

He graduated from high school in 1944 and in June of that year was drafted into the Army. On Christmas Eve, Grapengeter shipped out to England aboard a British steamer. As a member of Gen. George S. Patton's 3rd Army, he participated in the Battles of the Ardennes and Rhine Valley, and the Central Europe Campaign.

Grapengeter heard that a colonel was looking for an orderly, so he applied, and was selected, for the job. He only held the position for two weeks before he was selected to serve with the Tactical Military Government. His knowledge of the German language made him a valuable member of the organization.

After Germany's surrender, Grapengeter had the choice of going home to the United States or remaining in Germany with occupation forces. If he went home, he figured he would be sent to the Pacific theater to fight the Japanese, so he decided to stay put and help establish permanent government offices in county seats. Working as part of a small group of government liaisons, Grapengeter developed good working relationships with local town officials and played a major role



Army Brig. Gen. Robert P. Walters Jr. presents the Bronze Star Medal citation to Uwe G. Grapengeter for his service in Europe during World War II.

in setting up new communication protocols and health services.

He was discharged in June 1946 and returned to New Jersey. While studying engineering at Farley Dickinson Junior College, Grapengeter and several of his friends decided to join the Naval Reserve. Ultimately, he married, and he and his wife raised three children. He moved to Colorado in 2004.

While working to update Grapengeter's military records, Liddy came to believe his new friend's service was worthy of the Bronze Star. He submitted a package to the Army, which agreed with Liddy. The Army issued an order authorizing the medal, along with the Bronze Star citation, on Oct. 22.

Liddy wanted the award presentation ceremony to be special. So, he decided to use his own retirement ceremony to honor Grapengeter's service. He secretly made all of the arrangements. As Walters came forward and began reading the order, the crowd of more than 150 people let out a collective gasp, and Grapengeter was visibly touched by the recognition of a grateful nation.

(Information for this article provided by Maj. Glenn P. Richard III, chief of the Advanced Courses Branch, Headquarters Reserve National Security Space Institute at Peterson AFB.)

Though there were initial setbacks to this transition, to include limited workspace at larger units and the potential for significant backlogs with flight physicals, the wing was able to overcome these challenges through a series of in-depth process improvements.

"When I was first told we were going to a combined UTA, I thought, 'Great,'" said Chief Master Sgt. Deborah Cole, senior air reserve technician assigned to the 38th Aerial Port Squadron and former member of the 81st APS. "We have all this experience, and if we just take the two teams and intermingle, we are able to perform joint training together. By accomplishing this, we gain so much more knowledge and experience, and it becomes a better training environment with the different units' perspectives on how we do business."

The aerospace medicine squadron found similar benefits of the combined UTA, despite initial hurdles that the unit had to address.

"There was a perception from members of the wing that the 315th Aerospace Medicine Squadron would not be able to accommodate the number of physicals anticipated during the joint UTA," said Senior Master Sgt. Jehad A. Karriem, superintendent of aeromedical services. "Our main issue was manpower, but we also had some equipment challenges. However, the combined UTA was the solution to the question as we addressed these items with training, and changes were made. We were able to reduce wait times for long-physicals from an average of six hours to just under three."

During the three-month trial period, other challenges were identified to include parking, ease of getting through the gates during peak hours, lodging and dining. However, the wing conducted a number of sessions to look at the issues identified and discussed concrete courses of action to overcome any roadblocks that the single UTA construct presented. *(315th AW public affairs)*

New Agency Consolidates POW/MIA Mission

The Defense Department organizations responsible for accounting for U.S. military prisoners of war and those missing in action have been consolidated into one new agency.

Secretary Chuck Hagel called for a review early last year to bring together the Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office, the Joint Personnel Accounting Command and related laboratories into a single DOD agency.

"Finding, recovering and identifying the remains of these individuals is one of our highest responsibilities, and I believed that DOD could more effectively and transparently account for our missing personnel while ensuring their families receive timely and accurate information," Hagel said of the consolidation.

The secretary said the single agency, officially formed Jan. 12, is accountable, responsive and transparent, with comprehensive oversight of personnel accounting resources, research and operations.

The new agency will centralize communications with family members of the missing, he said, and "streamline the identification process; centralize budgetary resources; improve the search, recovery, and identification process; and develop proposals to expand public/private partnerships."

Initially, the agency is headquartered in Washington, D.C., with a decision on its permanent location expected early next year.

Hagel named three flag officers — one from each of the services — to direct the new agency, which will be named with input from the families of POWs and MIAs

Navy Rear Adm. Michael Franken is the agency's interim director. Air Force Maj. Gen. Kelly McKeague, JPAC commander, is serving as the deputy director, and Army Lt. Gen. Michael Linnington, military deputy to the undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, is the agency's senior adviser to Christine Wormuth, undersecretary of defense for policy, whose office oversees the agency.

"Secretary Hagel has said America will remain committed to always bringing home our missing and our fallen," Pentagon Press Secretary Rear Adm. John Kirby told reporters. "The decisions we are announcing today will ensure that we honor that solemn obligation."

Some 83,000 Americans are still listed as missing from past conflicts. *(Terri Moon Cronk, DOD News, Defense Media Activity, Washington, D.C.)*



Be Careful of Those 'High Flyers'

By Ralph Lunt

I was recently asked by a long-time client to see if I could find him a "flyer," also known as an aggressive stock pick. I looked at some of the stocks that were poised to benefit from the holiday gifting season, and while there were some great products, the stocks were just too pricy for me to recommend. Their price-to-earnings ratio was so high they would need to have earnings grow by 500 percent to get in line with most stocks.

For the record, my client is a personal friend, is financially comfortable and has been investing for 40 years. He has some cash in his account, earning no interest, and wanted to take a chance on a stock that might go up significantly in the next few months.

I looked at many stocks, but in our current all-time-high environment, I saw nothing I would put my money in. I called him back and gave him my professional opinion and sheepishly told him about a can't miss "high flyer" that I bought at \$60.00 that is now trading at \$19.00. The stock market is fickle. One of the reasons my client is financially comfortable is that he has taken a long-term approach to achieving his financial objectives.

My goal with this column is to encourage you all to be long-term investors first, and as your net worth and risk tolerance allows, if you get the temptation to hit a home run, understand that buying individual stocks is a risky business. Regular investment programs soften the ups and downs of the market and, from my experience, help investors achieve their financial goals. Once on track, dipping your toe into more aggressive waters may be profitable or a learning experience. Fly safe!

(Editor's note: This feature is designed to provide financial advice and information of a general nature. Individuals should conduct their own research and consult a financial adviser before making any financial decisions. Based in Cleveland, Ohio, Lunt is a certified financial planner and vice president of a financial planning and consulting firm. He is also a colonel in the Air Force Reserve, serving as the reserve forces director of the Great Lakes Region of the Civil Air Patrol adviser's program.)

Do You Have What it Takes?

There are opportunities for enlisted Reservists to attend the Air Force Academy

By Bo Joyner

It's not easy to gain admission to the Air Force Academy, and it's even harder to make it through four years of rigorous military, academic, athletic and character development training at the Colorado Springs school. But, there are opportunities and options available for young Air Force Reserve enlisted members who have what it takes and are interested in attending the flagship military academy for officer candidates for the U.S. Air Force.

"We have a number of enlisted people from the Air Force Reserve, Air National Guard and active duty who attend the Academy every year," said Capt. Steven Clark of the school's Admissions Office. "In fact, we have found that prior-enlisted members usually do quite well at the Academy. Our prior-enlisted candidates are usually a little older and have a little more maturity, and their military training helps prepare them for the workload here."

The Air Force uses the LEAD (Leaders Encouraging Airman Development) program to encourage its best and brightest Airmen to apply for an appointment to the Academy.

"The Air Force Academy and its Preparatory School offer magnificent opportunities for our sharpest enlisted personnel to enter the commissioned ranks," Col. Carolyn Benyshek, the Academy's director of admissions, said in a recent letter explaining the LEAD program. "Prior-enlisted cadets possess both military knowledge and proven reliability, which makes them the archetype cadet and commissioned officer."

Benyshek encourages commanders and first sergeants to always be on the lookout for "leading-edge" Airmen who have the highest moral character and strong academic ability, and who are physically fit.

"The prior-enlisted cadets attending USAFA are truly among the best the Air Force has to offer, and it is because of your vision and dedication to the LEAD program that they are here," Benyshek said to commanders and chiefs. "We are grateful for your dedication to the Air Force and support of the LEAD program. I look forward to seeing your talented Airmen here at your United States Air Force Academy."

There are 85 slots available for direct entry to the Academy and the Prep School each year for active-duty Airmen who meet entry criteria. There are also 85 slots available to Reserve and Guard Airmen who must meet the same criteria as the active-duty Airmen.

Clark said all candidates must meet some basic criteria to be eligible to enter the Academy. All candidates must:

- Be citizens of the United States (unless nominated by an official of a country invited by the Department of Defense).
- Be unmarried with no dependents.
- Be of good moral character.
- Be at least 17, but less than 23, years of age by July 1 of the year of entry.
- Meet high leadership, academic, physical and medical standards.

Current enlisted Reservists who meet these criteria and are interested in attending the Academy should get the application process started by filling out and submitting an Air Force Form 1786 (Application for Appointment to the United States Air Force Academy under Quota Allotted to Enlisted Members of the Regular and Reserve Components of the Air Force.) This form requires Airmen's personal information, immediate commander's endorsement (no lower than squadron commander or equivalent) and military personnel flight assignments coordination.

In addition to filling out Form 1786, Clark encourages current enlisted members to start early to try and secure a nomination to the Academy from their U.S. senators, U.S. representative or the vice president. Airmen are not required to have a congressional

Making it through four years of rigorous military, academic, athletic and character development training at the Air Force Academy is difficult. But, there are opportunities available for young Air Force Reserve enlisted members who have what it takes and are interested in attending the Academy.

nomination, but they are highly encouraged to seek one. Each member of Congress and the vice president can have five appointees attending the Air Force Academy at any time. The process for obtaining a congressional nomination is not political, and candidates do not have to know their senators or representative to secure a nomination. Most years, each representative or senator will have at least one slot at the Academy to fill. For each slot, members can submit up to 10 names.

Additional nomination slots are available for children of career military members, children of disabled veterans or veterans who were killed in action, or children of Medal of Honor recipients.

Candidates for admission are judged on their academic achievement, demonstrated leadership, athletics and character. Most incoming classes have about 1,200 cadets, and usually about 100 of them are former enlisted members of the active-duty Air Force or reserve components.

"Most prior-enlisted Airmen who make it through the appli-

cation process are accepted into the Preparatory School first, and then if they are successful there, they are accepted as cadets at the Academy," Clark said. "Oftentimes, our prior-enlisted candidates have been out of school for a while, and the Prep School helps them get back into an academic routine."

The Prep School is located on the campus of the Academy. Its mission is to prepare, motivate and evaluate cadet candidates for success at the Air Force Academy. The Prep School offers a 10-month program of intense academic preparation, military training and athletic conditioning designed to develop in cadet candidates the skills and character necessary to be successful at the Academy.

Prior-enlisted members retain their military rank while at the Prep School.

Once they make it to the Academy, cadets can expect to be challenged in all aspects of their development. In addition to rigorous military training, cadets take a broad academic course load with an extensive core curriculum in engineering,

humanities, social sciences, basic sciences, military studies and physical education. All cadets participate in either inter-collegiate or intramural athletics, and a thorough character development and leadership curriculum provides cadets a basis for future officership.

"The Academy is tough, and it's definitely not for everyone," Clark said. "Cadets have to be motivated and committed to succeed here."

He encouraged current enlisted Airmen who are serious about wanting to attend the Academy to go the extra mile to make their admissions package stand out amongst their peers.

"Do everything you can to make your package stand out," Clark said. "You need to be taking some college-level courses, you need to be volunteering in your community, and you need to be assuming leadership roles in the things you are doing. These are the kinds of things that will help you stand out."

"The Academy looks at the whole person. You have to be a

good student, but we also look at a person's physical fitness, leadership abilities and character as well."

Clark also encouraged potential cadets to get in touch with their nearest admissions liaison officer as soon as possible. There are 1,600 ALOs located throughout the United States and overseas. Their job is to help candidates throughout the admissions process.

"ALOs are qualified to help candidates in all aspects of admission and to answer questions about the Academy's education and training," Clark said. "They are a great resource for Airmen who are interested in attending the Academy."

Current enlisted Air Force Reservists who think they have what it takes and are interested in applying for admission to the Academy should talk to their commander or first sergeant, their base education office, or their ALO. Comprehensive information about applying to the Academy, as well as all admission requirements, is available at www.academyadmissions.com.

One cadet's story: Reservist offers Air Force Academy advice

(Editor's note: Cadet First Class Sarah Farmer is on track to graduate from the Air Force Academy in May with a dual major in biology and behavioral science. Upon graduation, she plans to serve her country as an Air Force intelligence officer. This is the story of how the former Air Force Reserve enlisted member made it to where she is today.)

By Bo Joyner

When Sarah Farmer was wrapping up her senior year at Doherty High School in Colorado Springs, Colorado, in 2009, she thought about applying to the Air Force Academy just a few miles from her house, but she didn't think she had the grades or the SAT scores to get in.

"I was a pretty good student, but I wasn't at the top of my class, so I didn't think I had a chance of being accepted," Farmer said.

Looking for a way to help pay for college and satisfy the desire she had to serve her country, Farmer enlisted in the Air Force Reserve soon after graduation. Following basic military training, she went to tech school to train to be a dental technician.

"I did really well at tech school," Farmer said. "I was No. 1 in my class, and I had an instructor who told me I ought to think about applying to the Academy."

That was the push she needed.

"I thought, 'What the heck. Let's give it a shot.'"

Home on leave from tech school in December 2009, Farmer started the lengthy and sometimes confusing process of applying for admission to the Academy.

"I definitely got a late start," she said. "The whole application package was due Feb. 15, so I really had to hustle to get it done and turned in on time."

The first step in the process is to complete the initial application survey, called the pre-candidate questionnaire.

"That was the easy part," Farmer said. "It simply asks

for your grade point average, community service hours, extracurricular activities, SAT/ACT scores, etc. ...

"I had to wait for that stage to be screened and accepted before moving on to the next stage, which involved writing three essays on topics such as leadership, role models and military service."

After making it through the second stage, Farmer was told she needed to get an endorsement letter from her commander, and she was given information on the Candidate Fitness Assessment.

"Asking for my commander's endorsement was nerve-racking simply because I had only recently arrived at the unit before asking to leave to attend the Academy," she said. "The interview with my commander was the toughest interview I've ever been through, but I guess he liked what he heard because he gave me the endorsement."

"The only obstacle left after that was the CFA, which I thought was going to be easy, but it turned out to be the most difficult part because no one I talked to thought they were allowed to administer the test."

"I read the regulation, and it said any coach or physical training leader could administer the test. But the people I asked did not seem to think they were fit to oversee it. The frustrating part of the process was that I was at Peterson Air Force Base, which is only right across town from the Academy. I could not imagine the difficulty other Airmen from bases even further away were going through."

Finally, while Farmer was performing on-the-job training at the Academy Dental Clinic, the enlisted physical training leader there offered to proctor the test.

"I performed the test and turned the paperwork in to the Academy on Feb. 15, the last day to turn it in."

Farmer said she then waited and watched to see if her status changed from "candidate" to "appointee," but nothing happened. At the end of April, she called her

Academy counselor to check on the status.

"First, he said he couldn't find my package," she said. "Then, he said the only thing holding up my status was that they had no contact information on my commander."

"I called my commander that night. He lived in Montana even though he was assigned to Peterson. I told him the situation and he said, 'What? I'll handle it' and he hung up. The next UTA (unit training assembly), I received my appointment to the Air Force Academy Preparatory School."

Most prior-enlisted Airmen attend the Prep School before entering the Academy, and Farmer said she was glad she did.

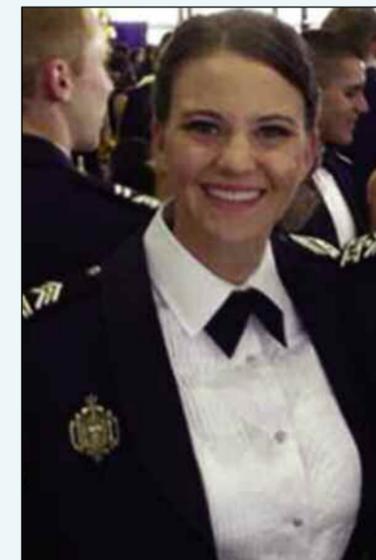
"After Prep School, I knew what to expect from the Academy more than my direct-entry counterparts, and I also entered the Academy with about 200 friends, while the direct-entry cadets entered mostly on their own."

Farmer said the application process can be frustrating, but it is definitely manageable.

"I think they make the process difficult and confusing to make sure the people who are applying really want the appointment," she said. "It's a way of weeding out people who don't really want to be here."

Farmer has a few tips for Reservists who are interested in applying for an Academy appointment:

- Make sure this is what you want. "The Academy is hard — academically, physically and mentally," she said. "You have to really want it if you are going to make it through."



Cadet First Class Sarah Farmer was an enlisted Air Force Reservist when she decided to apply for admission to the Air Force Academy.

- Don't sell yourself short. "I made the mistake of thinking my grades weren't good enough to get me in, but it turns out they were. The Academy looks at the whole person: their grades, leadership abilities, extracurricular activities and physical fitness. You'll never know if you can get in unless you try."

- Take control of the process. "You can't rely on anybody else to do the work for you. You have to be the one in charge. Constantly check on the progress of your package, and if things hit a snag, work hard to get them moving again."

- Start early. "I didn't start early enough, and I was barely able to meet the deadline. Know when the deadlines are and make sure you have enough time to get everything done. There is also an age cutoff (candidates must be less than 23 years of age by July 1 of

the year of entry) that you have to be aware of."

- Know where to go for advice. "Academy liaison officers are a great resource. Mine was always available to offer help and encouragement. I would also recommend talking to other prior-enlisted Airmen who have made it through the Academy."

Farmer said she thinks it's important for commanders and first sergeants to know how the admissions process works and to encourage outstanding young Airmen who might want to go the Academy.

"I am so thankful I had an instructor in tech school who saw something in me and encouraged me to apply for admission to the Academy," she said. "It's one of the best decisions I've ever made."

The Family Business

Reserve pilot is following in mother's, father's and brother's footsteps

1st Lt. Meaghan Cosand, a C-5B Galaxy pilot with the 349th Air Mobility Wing, Travis Air Force Base, California, starts engines in preparation for takeoff from Kadena Air Base, Japan, in August. She was flying a mobility channel mission, moving high-priority cargo and passengers among air bases in the U.S. Pacific Command area of responsibility. (Lt. Col. Robert Couse-Baker)

By Bo Joyner

First Lt. Meaghan Cosand didn't always want to be a pilot in the Air Force Reserve, but the fact that she ended up as one shouldn't be all that surprising. After all, flying for the Reserve is kind of a family business for the Cosands.

Meaghan flies C-5 Galaxies for the Reserve's 349th Air Mobility Wing out of Travis Air Force Base, California. Her mother, Kathy, served in the Reserve for 30 years, primarily flying C-141 Starlifters, before retiring in 2006. She was the first woman in the Air Force Reserve to graduate from undergraduate military pilot training. Meaghan's brother, Rob, a captain, flies KC-135 Stratotankers for the Reserve's 434th Air Refueling Wing out of Grissom Air Reserve Base, Indiana. Meaghan's dad, Bob, is the oddball. He never flew for the Reserve, but he was an active-duty Air Force pilot for 23 years before retiring in 2000.

"Flying is definitely in my blood," Meaghan said. "I've grown up around it all my life."

And while Rob knew from an early age that he wanted to be a pilot, the flying bug waited a little later to bite Meaghan.

"I was in high school, and it was time to start thinking about a career, so I told my parents that I wanted to be a pilot," she said. "They didn't believe me because I hadn't shown an interest in flying before then."

"I told Meaghan to take some classes, at least some ground school stuff, to see if this is really what she wanted to do," Kathy said. "Even if she didn't like it, she would know what the rest of us would be talking about around the dinner table."

"I told Meaghan she could always go into the family business, which, of course, was flying airplanes for Uncle Sam," Bob added.

So Meaghan signed up for some classes at the Scott AFB, Illinois, Aero Club when she was 17, and she was hooked.

"My mom and dad saw how much I enjoyed it, and that was it."

Meaghan went on to the University of Oklahoma, like her mother and brother, where she majored in aviation management. One of the first things she did after graduation was join the Air Force Reserve.

"My grandparents live in Vallejo, California, so I interviewed for a Reserve job at Travis in 2010."

She was hired and has been serving in the 349th AMW ever since. Meaghan said that once she decided on pursuing a career as a pilot, her parents were extremely supportive of her decision.

"They never pushed me to be a pilot, but they've definitely supported me every step of the way," she said. "Sometimes, it got a little embarrassing."

Like the time her parents were in the control tower the first time she soloed in a T-6 during pilot training.

"I didn't know they were there, and it took me a little bit by surprise. I finally realized that you just have to let your parents be parents."

As if there weren't enough Air Force pilots in the family already, Meaghan is engaged to an active-duty MC-12 Liberty pilot, Capt. Mark Camp, who is stationed at Beale AFB in California. The couple is plan-

ning an April wedding, and they are currently living in Sacramento, about halfway between Beale and Travis.

"When he gets his next orders, we don't know where we will end up, but I plan on staying with the 349th and commuting to Travis," Meaghan said.

She remembers early on when she and Mark were first dating and she brought him to her parents' home.

"Mark and my brother and my dad sat out on the porch most of the night talking about flying," she said. "Mark came back and asked me, 'What would they have done if I had been an accountant?'"

Flying is definitely the primary topic of conversation whenever the Cosand family gets together. They talk about flying for the Reserve, and they also talk about flying for the airlines. Kathy and Rob are both 767 pilots for American Airlines, based in Miami. They are believed to be the first mother-son team to fly the same aircraft for American out of the same hub.

"My dad has been retired from the Air Force since 2000, and he definitely wants to stay current with everything that is going in the world of flying, so pilot talk always comes up around the dinner table," Meaghan said.

"I love to hear about what Rob and Meaghan are doing in the Reserve," Bob said. "I thought the ops tempo was crazy back before I retired, but it's gotten even busier. It's amazing what Air Force pilots are doing these days."

It's not uncommon for the sons of Air Force Reserve pilots to follow in their father's footsteps, but it is rarer for daughters to follow in their mother's footsteps. Currently there are 208 pilots assigned to the 349th AMW. Thirteen are female.

"It's still a male-dominated profession, but I know I have it a lot easier than my mom did when she was flying for the Reserve," Meaghan said. "I am so thankful for people like my mom who blazed the trail for people like me."

As one of the first female pilots in the Air Force, Kathy said she faced a lot of obstacles.

"I had a lot of great instructors and mentors who helped me early on in my career, but there were definitely some people who didn't think women should be flying airplanes," she said. "I had this one old flight engineer who flat out refused to talk to me directly. My attitude was, 'I'm gonna show this SOB how I can fly this plane.'"

Then there was the time she flew into Kenya, and officials at the airport there refused to accept that she was the aircraft commander.

"They wouldn't let me lead my crew through customs," she said.

And the times she flew into Turkey, and the Turkish air traffic controllers refused to talk to her over the radio. And the time a group of Marines was set to board her C-141 when they saw that the pilot and co-pilot were both women and asked the loadmaster, "Oh my God, is it safe?" And he told them, "They ain't killed us yet."

In 1977, Kathy and nine other female officers were the first women to graduate from the Air Force Undergraduate Pilot Training Program, with Kathy holding the only Air Force Reserve slot in Class 77-08.

She was the first female pilot to earn the Air Medal follow-



Meaghan Cosand (left) and her brother, Rob (right), are both pilots in the Air Force Reserve. Their mother, Kathy, flew for the Reserve for 30 years, while their father, Bob, was an active-duty Air Force pilot.

ing a mission to Zaire in 1978.

"The mission commander was an older major, and he asked me if I wanted to be a part of his crew," Kathy said. "I said absolutely. He told me to get to the aircraft right away. There was a contingency going on in Zaire at the time, and as soon as they saw I was a woman, they would kick me off the mission. I managed to sneak on and fly missions for a week. It was an incredible experience."

When Kathy found out she was pregnant with Rob in 1983, she was grounded right away, but Air Force rules had changed a little by the time she got pregnant with Meaghan in 1988.

"By that time, you could fly up to 24 weeks if you had a waiver," Kathy said. "I was one of the first women to apply for the waiver, and I got it. So Meaghan was flying with me before she even knew it."

Both mother and daughter said they love wherever being a pilot takes them.

"I love the sunsets and the sunrises," Kathy said. "I love flying over the Grand Canyon and seeing the blue of the Caribbean Sea. Being a pilot has taken me all over the world."

"I love being able to serve my country, and I love seeing new places," Meaghan said.

As a Reservist, she frequently flies to Hawaii and has been to Guam, Japan and England, among other places.

"We grew up primarily on the East Coast, but I've really enjoyed being on the West Coast and all the places that I get to fly to from here," Meaghan said.

With a wedding just around the corner, it might not be too long before there's another pilot-to-be in the Cosand family.

"We joke all the time that if we ever have a little girl, we're gonna paint pink airplanes all over the nursery," Meaghan said.

"Those kids don't have a chance," Kathy said. "How could they be anything but pilots?"

A Passion to Serve

U.S. congressman/Reserve chaplain finds satisfaction in giving back

(Editor's Note: This story is part of a regular series of articles that will highlight the unique capabilities that Air Force Reservists bring to the fight every day. Make sure to check out future issues of the magazine for more Profiles in Leadership.)

By Bo Joyner

Air Force Reserve Chaplain (Maj.) Doug Collins has always had a passion for serving others, and following that passion has led him all the way to the U.S. House of Representatives. Congressman Collins serves Georgia's 9th Congressional District in Washington, D.C., representing more than 700,000 residents of North Georgia in the nation's capital.

"I've always enjoyed helping out other people," Collins said during a recent phone interview. "I grew up in a household where my father was a Georgia state trooper and my mom provided care services to local senior citizens, so I learned from an early age that there is great satisfaction in giving back."

Collins has combined his passion for serving others with an interest in politics to create a very successful career as a legislator at both the state and national levels. He served three terms in the Georgia House of Representatives from 2007 to 2013 before running for the U.S. Congress in 2012. He said his interest in politics really took off while he was attending North Georgia College & State University in the late 1980s, pursuing a bachelor's degree in political science and criminal law. He would go on to earn a master of divinity degree from the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in 1996 and a juris doctor degree from John Marshall Law School in 2007.

"It's an honor to represent the people of the 9th District in Congress," Collins said. "I was born and raised in Gainesville, Georgia, and I love doing everything I can to make life better for the people in my district."

The congressman's desire to help others has extended to his military career as well. In the late 1980s, he served two years in the Navy as a chaplain. After the 9/11 terrorist attacks, he felt compelled to re-start his military career and joined the Air Force Reserve as a chaplain to support the troops fighting the Global



Chaplain (Maj.) Doug Collins has been in the Air Force Reserve since 2001.

War on Terror. As a member of the Reserve, Collins has served as an individual mobilization augmentee and a unit Reservist assigned to the 94th Airlift Wing at Dobbins Air Reserve Base in Georgia.

Currently, he is serving in the Individual Ready Reserve and meets regularly with other Reservists in the D.C. area who are in the same status.

"We have quite a group of Reservists who get together to meet our military requirements," he said. "My military legislative assistant is an

Army Ranger, and he keeps me on track."

Collins said one of the highlights of his military career was his deployment to Balad Air Base, Iraq, in 2008. For five months he served as the nighttime flight line chaplain and had a chance to meet and pray with troops who were fighting on the front lines as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"I spent a lot of time at the main hospital at Balad, visiting with our injured service members," Collins said. "As a chaplain, that's what we train for, and that's why we do what we do. It was a humbling experience to offer support to the men and women who were out there putting their lives on the line."

The congressman said serving in the military has definitely helped him be a better legislator.

"There aren't a lot of people in Congress who have military experience," he said. "Having served gives me a real-world understanding of how things actually work in our armed services."

Clearly, faith plays a huge part in Collins' life. Before deciding to make a bid for the Georgia House of Representatives, he was a senior pastor at Chicopee Baptist Church in Gainesville for 11 years. Despite a busy schedule that requires him to split his time between Washington and North Georgia, he is still actively involved in Gainesville's Lakewood Baptist Church.

Family is also an extremely important part of Collins' life. His wife of 27 years, Lisa, is a teacher at Mount Vernon Elementary School in Gainesville. They have three children: Jordan, Copelan and Cameron.

Collins said that time management is definitely one of his greatest challenges.

"Sometimes it doesn't seem like there are enough hours in the day," he said. "When I'm in Washington, there are numerous meetings and appointments, and when I'm back home in Georgia I try to meet with as many of my constituents as I can. A lot of times the people you meet with are disgruntled, and it takes time to work within the system to try and find a solution to their problem."

In the last Congress, Collins served on the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the U.S. House Committee on the Judiciary, and the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. It definitely takes a lot of coordination to find the time to do everything.

Managing his political and military careers can be tricky, Collins said, but it's definitely doable.

"As a Reservist, you hear a lot of talk about juggling your civilian job, your military job and your family life, but I've always looked at it a little differently," he said. "Family is your foundation. Everything else gets juggled, but not your family. That's the one thing that remains constant."



Congressman Doug Collins represents Georgia's 9th Congressional District.

POST-9/11 GI BILL

How to Apply, Transfer Benefits

(Editor's note: Information in this article on how to apply for and transfer Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits applies to Air Force Reservists only. Members of the Air National Guard should refer to their retention office for information that applies to them.)

By Master Sgt. Timm Huffman

The Post-9/11 GI Bill is a great benefit for Reservists to utilize when they, or a family member, wish to pursue higher education or training. However, the process of applying for benefits is often shrouded in mystery.

Fortunately, the education office at Headquarters Air Reserve Personnel Center, Buckley Air Force Base, Colorado, has outlined easy-to-follow steps Reservists can follow to apply for the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

According to Holly Klein, to start the process, Reservists must first do a review of their qualifying active-duty point credit summary to determine their eligibility. To do this, they must log in to the Virtual Military Personnel Flight, select "Self-Service Actions," "Personal Data" and then "ANG/USAFR Point Credit Summary Inquiry."

The point credit summary can be somewhat confusing, but Klein explained it is designed to be read line by line and that it matches up with the members' military pay history. Reservists should look for their qualifying duty type codes, or TDs, which are 1, 2, 3 and 5, and tally the number of days next to each TD.

When members have reached 90 days of qualifying active-duty service, they become eligible for 40 percent of the available benefits. At 180 days, eligibility goes up by 10 percent, and it increases by 10 percent for each additional six months of active-duty service. At 1,095 days of qualifying service, members qualify for 100 percent of benefits. Time spent on active duty for basic military training and technical school do not initially count toward eligibility. However, once members reach 80 percent eligibility, that time can be counted.

After eligibility is determined, Reservists may request a letter of certification through myPers by utilizing the "Email Us" tool. The request should indicate the member's component and that the request is for "Benefits and Entitlements. In addition, the subject should read, "Post-9/11 GI Bill Application." Reservists must also indicate whether they have been a member of the Air National Guard since Sept. 11, 2001. This letter is not necessary if members have a Department of Defense Form 214 showing three years of active-duty service since Sept. 11, 2001. As members complete additional qualifying active-duty time, they may request a new letter of certification to move their eligibility to the next percentage level. Once the Department of Veterans Affairs has documented the increase, the VA will increase the benefit at the beginning of the next term.

After ARPC provides the letter of certification, members may begin the application process for their Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits through the VA. They may apply before receiving the letter of certification from ARPC, but the VA may not be able to see all of the qualifying active-duty service when determining eligibility. The letter of certification also works as supporting documentation if an appeal of the VA's initial decision is necessary.

To start the application process, Reservists must visit the Veterans Online Applications website (<http://www.vabenefits.va.gov/vonapp/default.asp>) and fill out the Post-9/11 GI Bill application, VA Form 22-1990. After logging in, members will indicate they wish to apply for the Post-9/11 GI Bill by clicking on the "Create a New Form" drop down menu and selecting "Education Benefits." According to Klein, the first question in this application is the most important, as it is where members revoke eligibility for the regular GI Bill program in favor of using their Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits. This revocation may not be changed, and members may want to contact ARPC Education Services

to confirm other eligibility. If members have their letter of certification from ARPC, they will upload it at the end of the form in addition to or in lieu of a DD Form 214.

Once the VA has reviewed an application, which may take a few weeks or months, depending on the time of year, it will provide a certificate of eligibility indicating what percentage level of benefits the applicant qualifies to receive.

The Post-9/11 GI Bill program provides 36 months of 40 percent to 100 percent of tuition and fees, capped at the most expensive state school; basic allowance for housing at the staff sergeant with dependents rate; and a \$1,000 annual stipend for books. Additionally, once members reach 100 percent eligibility, they also qualify for the Yellow Ribbon Program. Under this program, a number of schools across the United States provide additional funding to students at their schools, often making up the difference between the amount paid by the Post-9/11 GI Bill and the cost of tuition at that institution.

Members of the Selected Reserve also have the opportunity to transfer some or all of their Post-9/11 benefits to spouses and children. This may be done at any time after they have earned six years of satisfactory service and as long as the members have at least 40 percent eligibility. Transfer is accomplished via www.dmdc.osd.mil/milconnect. Transferring benefits incurs a four-year Selected Reserve service commitment, so this should be done as early as possible in the process.

"It doesn't behoove you to wait (to transfer benefits), as you can always revoke the benefits," Klein said. "If you give even a small percentage to each dependent, then you can always toggle the months around as needed, even when you leave the Selected Reserve."

Klein said members should transfer benefits even if they are unsure of who may actually use them, as the allocated months can always be adjusted or revoked. Benefits not transferred while members are participating cannot be given after leaving active-duty or Selected Reserve status. Klein said all unused benefits will revert back to the members.

Benefits may be transferred to spouses, regardless of age, once members have six years in service. After 10 years of service time, members may transfer benefits to children registered in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System, up to their 23rd birthday, so long as

"THIS IS THE MOST ENCOMPASSING EDUCATIONAL BENEFIT THE VA HAS EVER GIVEN MEMBERS. IT WILL PAY FOR EVERYTHING, FROM A CERTIFICATE PROGRAM TO YOUR SECOND MASTER'S DEGREE TO A DOCTORAL PROGRAM. USE IT TO THE FULLEST."

they are registered as full-time students in a degree program. Members make their dependents eligible by giving them a month or more of their benefits. Children may begin using transferred benefits at age 18 all the way up to their 26th birthday.

In order to begin receiving the transferred benefits, eligible dependents must also create an account on the Veterans Online Applications website, complete a VA Form 22-1990E and communicate the Post-9/11 GI Bill information to their chosen school.

"This is the most encompassing educational benefit the VA has ever given members," Klein said. "It will pay for everything, from a certificate program to your second master's degree to a doctoral program. Use it to the fullest."

Benefits may also be used for to pay for flight training and apprenticeships, she said.

For full details on the Post-9/11 GI Bill, visit the VA webpage at http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/post911_gibill.asp. Another useful tool is the GI Bill Comparison Tool, which provides an estimate of how much benefits will pay based on the school members plan to attend. This tool is located at <http://department-of-veterans-affairs.github.io/gi-bill-comparison-tool/>.

(Huffman is assigned to the Headquarters Individual Reservist Readiness and Integration Organization at Buckley AFB.)

SKYWARN

Amateur radio operator helps save lives during severe weather

By Bo Joyner

Maj. Shane Lee is an avid amateur radio operator, and he has turned his hobby into a way to help save lives.

Lee, an Air Force Reserve C-130 instructor pilot assigned to the 913th Airlift Group at Little Rock Air Force Base, Arkansas, is a volunteer for Arkansas Skywarn — a network of trained storm spotters who voluntarily watch, track and report during severe weather events.

Skywarn is a nationwide program that is sometimes referred to as the “eyes and ears” of the National Weather Service. Lee said the Arkansas Skywarn program is a little different from most.

“Skywarn isn’t uniquely an amateur radio program,” he said. “People also participate via phone, but here we are unique in the fact that it is done primarily by amateur radio with a station at NWS-North Little Rock. Having a skilled operator at the NWS office means that we have eye-to-eye contact with the forecasters. That ensures two-way information from the NWS office.”

When the NWS anticipates severe weather, it contacts local Skywarn program coordinators to schedule net control operators for the event.

That’s just what happened on Saturday, April 26, 2014. Danny Straessle, program coordinator for Arkansas Skywarn, got a call from the NWS asking him to set up a net for the next day. Straessle scheduled crews starting at 10 a.m. April 27. He penciled in Lee for the early evening shift beginning at 5 p.m. and ending at 9 p.m.

“We had an idea that April 27 was going to be a bad day, but we had no idea exactly how bad,” Lee recalled. Soon after he arrived for his shift, things began to really heat up. “It got real crazy real fast,” he said.

At 7:06 p.m., a weak tornado touched down in western Pulaski County, just south of Little Rock. For the next hour, as the tornado increased in intensity and cut a deadly path through Central Arkansas, Lee controlled the Skywarn radio traffic as it flowed in and out

of the Little Rock NWS office.

“I actually had two trainees (Pat Thomas and David Wilmot) working with me that night, and it was a good thing I did,” Lee said, “because it took all three of us to keep up with everything that was going on.”

The 3/4-of-a-mile wide tornado with winds that reached speeds as high as 190 mph (making it a high-end EF4 tornado on the enhanced Fujita scale) traveled along a 41-mile path, leaving death and destruction in its wake. In all, 16 people lost their lives, making it the deadliest tornado in Arkansas since the May 15, 1968, twister that killed 35. The town of Vilonia, located just north of Little Rock, was hit hardest. Nine people were killed there, and numerous homes and businesses were destroyed with only piles of debris left behind. A smaller tornado touched down in Vilonia on April 25, 2011, killing four people.

“Shane’s knowledge of meteorology and experience working the radio, both in the military and as a hobby in amateur radio, really came in handy that night as things began to heat up,” Straessle said. “The entire time, Shane did a great job of controlling the radio traffic flowing in and out of NWS-Little Rock. As reports came in, Shane was able to ask the right questions for follow-up.”

“In a major event like this, it’s not uncommon for multitudes of out-of-town storm chasers to converge on the projected impact area. While Arkansas Skywarn will not position chasers for storm intercepts, we will help safely navigate field personnel from the potential path of destruction. Shane did this several times on his shift and notably on one occasion where one of our storm spotters checked in from downtown Vilonia. Shane promptly informed the spotter he was in the path of destruction. While he did end up in the hospital, Shane is credited for helping to save the guy’s life.”

“That’s why I do this — to hopefully help save lives,” Lee said.

It’s very likely that Lee saved more lives that day. There were just under 5,000 discrete internet connec-

tions to Arkansas Skywarn that day, and more people were listening via scanner or on amateur radio frequencies.

“TV stations were listening to us, the NWS was listening to us, the general public was listening to us,” Straessle said. “Even well after the event, recordings of the net were circulated nationwide throughout the amateur radio community as a fine example of how a net should be run. In fact, several amateur radio organizations devoted to emergency communications are using at least one of these recordings as training material.”

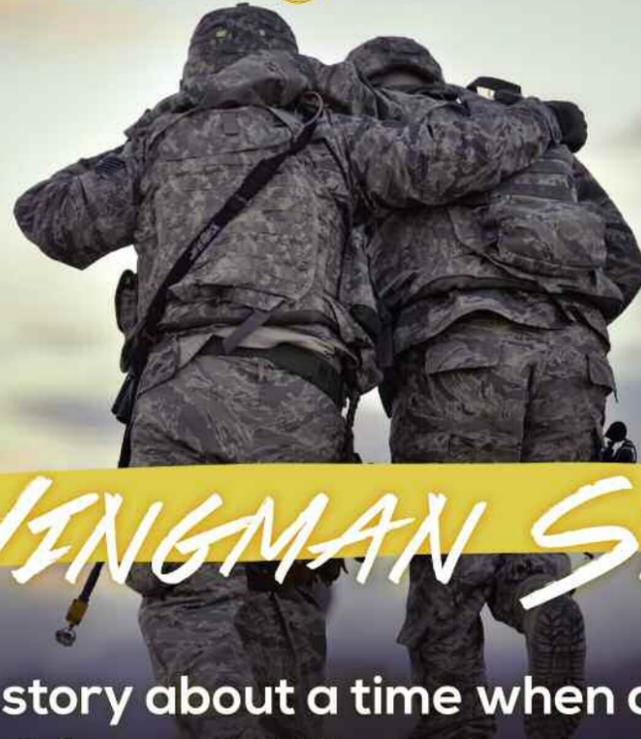
Lee has been involved with Arkansas Skywarn since 2010. He never knows when he might get that next call to help track severe weather.

“2011 was a crazy year, and I got called in about a dozen times,” he said. “Then, in 2012, I got called twice. You just never know, so you have to be ready for anything.”

Straessle knows he can count on Lee whenever there is a major weather event.

“Arkansas Skywarn has been around at least four decades,” he said. “Over the years, we have had similar events to the April 27 tornado that leveled the cities of Mayflower and Vilonia. And each time one of our members rose up to the occasion and significantly contributed to saving lives and property. April 27 was Major Lee’s turn, and his execution was flawless. His superior communication skills make him the ideal net control operator during times of emergency. We are pleased to count him among our number of Arkansas Skywarn net control operators.”

Most NWS offices offer Skywarn spotter training. Anyone interested in volunteering should contact their local office to see when and where the training is offered. Having an amateur radio license is not a requirement, but it makes communications a lot easier, Lee said.



MY WINGMAN STORY

Do you have a story about a time when a Wingman was looking out for you? What about a time when you helped out your Wingman?

Dig deep, think about it ... and then **SHARE!** We're looking for inspired stories of Airmen, friends and families helping one another get through a tough time in life. Whether it's being there for a friend who just lost a loved one, helping someone advance his/her career or supporting someone through a rough patch in life, we want to hear from you. If you were on the receiving end of a boost, tell us who helped you find success, happiness or comfort, and how you got connected.

SHARE YOUR STORY

Go to AFRC.WingmanToolkit.org and click "Add to the Toolkit" at the bottom of the homepage. Written and video stories are accepted and appreciated.